Forklift and pedestrian safety

For the start of the shift: blind spots, the horn, marked walkways and what to do before you step into the aisle.

DURATION
5 minutes

WHO LEADS IT
The supervisor or the safety lead, standing in front of the crew

WHEN TO USE IT
At the start of the shift, when forklifts and people on foot share the area or after the layout changes

WHAT TO BRING
A map of the area's marked walkways and, if possible, a parked forklift

Read it out loud

Good morning, everyone. Today's topic is a crossing that happens hundreds of times a shift: a forklift on one side, people on foot on the other.

The operator sees less than you think. A raised load blocks the front, the mast cuts the view and, in reverse, the operator looks over one shoulder. There are blind spots on both sides of the truck.

Picture a common scene. Someone leaves the break room reading their phone, steps into the aisle from behind a rack and walks right into a forklift backing up. The operator sounded the horn, but the person had earbuds in.

If you are on foot: use the marked walkways, stop before you cross, look both ways and make eye contact with the operator. If the operator hasn't seen you, you don't cross.

If you are driving: slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and blind corners, keep your speed down where people walk and, if the load blocks your view, travel with the load trailing or ask for a spotter.

Nobody walks next to a moving forklift, stands or passes under raised forks or rides on the forks. And a walkway blocked by a pallet gets reported right away.

To wrap up: in the aisle, the person on foot always loses. Checking that the operator saw you takes three seconds.

What OSHA says

- 29 CFR 1910.178 requires the driver to slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and wherever vision is obstructed, to travel with the load trailing when it blocks the forward view (1910.178(n)(4)) and to look in the direction of travel (1910.178(n)(6)).
- No one may stand or pass under the elevated portion of a truck, loaded or empty (1910.178(m)(2)), and unauthorized riders are not allowed (1910.178(m)(3)). Where forklifts are used, aisles need safe clearances, are kept clear and, when permanent, are marked (1910.176(a)).

Source: OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.178 (Powered industrial trucks) and 1910.176 (Handling materials, general), current text. Reviewed on October 29, 2026.

Questions for the crew

1. **What do you do before crossing an aisle where forklifts run?**
   Expected answer: Stop before the crossing, look both ways and make eye contact with the operator. If the operator hasn't seen me, I wait. Drivers must slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles (1910.178(n)(4)).
2. **Why does the operator sometimes not see people on foot?**
   Expected answer: Because the load, the mast and driving in reverse create blind spots. That is why the driver travels with the load trailing when it blocks the forward view (1910.178(n)(4)) and looks in the direction of travel (1910.178(n)(6)).
3. **Where is nobody allowed to stand?**
   Expected answer: Under the raised forks, loaded or empty (1910.178(m)(2)), or between a truck and a bench or wall it is driving toward (1910.178(m)(1)). And nobody rides a forklift without a safe place to ride (1910.178(m)(3)).

Sign-in sheet

Date _____ **Area** _____ **Led by** _____

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Working guide from Fyware: not an official form or legal advice. This sheet records that the toolbox talk took place; it is not a training certification.

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